

# Christmas Days

Judd Mortimer Lewis

ROBERT J. SHORES, Publisher



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# Christmas Days









# CHRISTMAS DAYS

By

JUDD MORTIMER LEWIS



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*To the Little Mothers of the World this book of verse is dedicated. For them no bands play and no banners wave, yet the battles they wage for their loved ones, call for more fortitude, more sacrifice, more suffering, than the soldier endures upon the field of battle. God be with the Mothers of the world, for only as they triumph can the world grow better.*

JUDD MORTIMER LEWIS.



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# Christmas Days





## CHRISTMAS DAYS

**C**HRISTMAS days, and Christmas ways  
And, oh, the Christmas weather!  
Little boys and painted toys  
And wee glad girls together;  
And Santa Claus a-flinging things,  
And dancing as he flings 'em;  
Mother crooning Christmas songs  
And laughing as she sings 'em.

Children's days, and children's ways,  
And green trees decorated  
With red carts and tinsel hearts,  
All wants anticipated!  
Never one wee babe forgot,  
And never one that's slighted!  
Ring-around-a-rosy-time,  
With all the candles lighted!

Little girls with yellow curls,  
And manly boys to love 'em!  
Mistletoe hung way down low,  
Just bound to get above 'em!  
Love gifts for the older ones,  
And green and scarlet holly,  
Shrieks of glee from everywhere,  
In a whole world gone jolly.

Dinner time, and tots to climb  
Up into chairs beside you,  
Goodies sweet, and things to eat—  
Oh, whate'er may betide you  
Christmas with the little folks,  
Filled with joy that bubbles,  
Is worth years of toil and moil  
And worth a year of troubles.

Christmas nights and lowered lights,  
And tousleheads all sleeping,  
Everywhere on floor and chair  
Toys in careless heaping;  
Dimpled arms all holding tight  
An engine or a dolly—  
Thank God for the Christmas-time,  
And mistletoe and holly!

## TOO SMALL

**S**OMETIMES I wish the Lord had  
made me with a whole lot bigger  
heart;

The one I've got gets so blamed full o' joy  
sometimes the teardrops start

With the sweet pain it throbs full of, when  
it's stretched till it's 'bout to break;

A sort of indescribable, a deep, exquisite  
sort of ache!

Like if another drop o' joy was poured into  
it, it would bust

And fill the world with happiness; I sort o'  
feel sometimes I must

Hop up onto a branch and sing, or simply  
choke with the distress

That comes o' havin' a heart made too  
small to hold its happiness.

If I could only pour it out like a wild bird  
pours out its song,  
It wouldn't be so bad; I could go a-singin'  
of it all day long;  
And that would sort o' take the ache out  
of a heart that's made too small;  
But, shoo! I couldn't keep a tune! I bed  
the horse down in his stall,  
And fill his manger full o' feed, and sort o'  
pat him on the flanks,  
And that's 'bout all that I can do. I ain't  
got language to give thanks;  
And all the critters on the place know me,  
and foller at my heels;  
But when a feller's heart's too small, there  
ain't no tellin' how it feels.

But I talk some; and that is more than what  
the horse can do, or cow;  
If I was shut up like they are I don't know  
what I'd do, or how  
I'd get along; I'd have to quit the farm and  
them and go away;  
I'd have to find me out a place where little  
children never play,

Where breezes never come at all, and bring  
the Southland's sweet perfume,  
Where cows don't moo, nor horses neigh,  
nor dogs don't bark, nor roses bloom,  
Nor where the yellow sun don't shine, nor  
where the stars don't blink of nights,  
Nor where, when darkness wraps the earth,  
there ain't no cottage window lights.

An' 'cause there ain't no place like that I'm  
mighty glad that I can talk  
An' tell things to the violets that bloom  
beside the garden walk;  
An' tell things to the cow an' horse, an'  
play with children in the sun,  
An' lift them to the fence to jump into my  
arms, when work is done,  
An' pick the reddest roses for the woman  
that puts up with me,  
Who, when I'm glad, seems to be glad as  
anyone could ever be;  
An' I can whistle some, an' I can fling back  
the wildbird's mornin' call;  
But when a feller's glad as me it hurts to  
have a heart so small.

## JUST BECAUSE I'M HAPPY

**I**T ain't to please the people that I  
hollerin' hooray;

It ain't to wake the world up at the break  
of the day;

It's just because I'm happy, an' I'm feelin'  
that-a-way

That I holler like a looney in the mornin'

It ain't because the crops are in an' growin'  
in the rains;

I ain't got out my pencil an' a-figgerin' no  
gains;

It's because the kids are happy and a  
weavin' daisy chains,

That I holler like a looney in the mornin'

I holler 'cause I'm happy with the thing  
of every day,

I holler 'cause old trouble goes around the  
other way;

It's just to please the babies rompin' happy  
at their play  
That I holler like a looney in the mornin'.

That's why I holler mornin's when I'm out  
a-hoein' corn,  
Till my voice wakes the crossways like the  
tootin' of a horn,  
To set the echoes chucklin' just as soon as  
they are born  
That I holler like a looney in the mornin'.

To set the echoes rollin'; 'tain't to please  
nobody but  
A little bit o' mother in a little bit o' hut  
With her little bits o' babies, to lighten up  
the rut,  
That I holler like a looney in the mornin'.

## POOR SANTA CLAUS

**I** HAVE always had a notion I wished I  
was Santa Claus,  
I have always had a notion I would like  
to be, because  
It would be such fun a-goin' down the  
chimneys all around,  
Tiptoein' into bedrooms, stoppin' at each  
little sound,  
With my ears pricked up to listen for the  
little fellers' tread,  
Peekin' out between the curtains, peekin'  
into each wee bed,  
Harkin' to the talk of daytimes of each  
eager little tyke,  
An' then, Christmas, fetchin to 'em all the  
pretty things they like.



I have always had a notion I would like to  
get his mail,  
And read every little letter till the stars got  
dim and pale  
Every morning. I imagine he gets just the  
quaintest pile  
Of wee notes that it's no wonder that he  
always wears a smile;  
But I've also got a notion, just a sort of  
faint surmise,  
I can see a little sorrow 'way back in his  
laughin' eyes;  
An' it's that there look of sorrow gets me  
feelin' glad because  
I am only me, and do not have to be a  
Santa Claus.

I'm a fool! For when the presents had been  
scattered everywhere,  
And been clasped to breasts of babies with  
night's tangles in their hair,  
When 'twas the day after Christmas, the  
morn after Christmas morn,  
With the glad girls with their dollies, with  
the boys each with a horn,

With the sun a-shinin' brightly, an' with  
glorious New Year's day  
Seemin' to wait for us laughin' only just a  
week away,  
I would turn from it a-sighin', put my  
empty knapsack by,  
An' wish I could take my smile off an' go  
off somewhere an' cry.

Cry for letters all unanswered, cry for  
stockings all unfilled,  
For child voices raised in hoping, now in  
disappointment stilled,  
I should want to go off somewhere by my  
lonesome just to grieve  
For the little bits o' stockings hanging  
empty Christmas Eve,  
That would hang empty and cheerless by  
the cold grate in the morn  
When with joy the world was ringing and  
the Christmas day was born;  
I would feel bad for the babies with their  
little cheeks tear-wet,  
Standin' grievin' Christmas mornin', think-  
in' Santa could forget.

I am glad that I'm not Santa, glad that I  
don't have to be;  
There won't be no little babies Christmas  
morning blamin' me  
'Cause their little baby stockings were all  
empty in the light  
Of the morning, that were hung up filled  
with hoping over night;  
I can feel bad and be grievin' all of Christ-  
mas Day because  
Of the disappointed babies without being  
Santa Claus;  
An' if I was him I reckon I could never  
play the part,  
For the thought of them I couldn't ever  
reach would break my heart.

## BERENICE

**N**EW roses, red roses; so graceful, so tall  
That a little girl's head could not top  
them at all;  
So red! as the heart of all color has sped  
To love them and hold them and make  
them so red;  
So fragrant, the fragrance of every known  
bloom,  
The soul of all flowers seems in their perfume;  
Toned down, made exquisite, made fitting  
for you.  
And so they come to you, and sparkling  
with dew  
To make glad your day, make your birthday  
more sweet,  
And carpet the day with their leaves for  
your feet.

What would the world be with no red  
    roses tall,  
Nor birds in the trees by the wayside, to  
    call  
“Good morning,” each morning, to greet  
    the glad sun,  
To let the world know a new day was  
    begun;  
A day of warm sunshine, as yellow as gold;  
A day of red blossoms, dew-laden, to hold;  
A day of glad brooks that go laughing  
    along;  
A new day, a glad day, a day brimmed  
    with song?  
What would the world be, robbed of  
    blossoms and dew?  
And what would life be in a world robbed  
    of you?

A world robbed forever, forever of you;  
The smile on your lips, in your soul, in the  
    blue  
Of your eyes. There are times when  
    living's a task,

When we drop to our knees, and fear, and  
we ask  
For rest, only rest! Just to sleep, and for  
long!  
Eyes shut to red roses, ears closed to the  
song  
Of birds in the trees! Then your laugh's in  
the hall;  
Your laugh at the weight of the world; and  
your call.  
We straighten and square for the task  
that's to do;  
And laugh. But our laugh is the courage  
of you.

## THOUGHT OF RESTING

**I** CAN shut my eyes and hear it, hear the  
river calling, calling;  
And can hear the rustling rushes in the  
shallows by the brink,  
And, below, I hear the torrent in its leaping  
and its falling,  
And, above, the spreading rapids where  
the cattle come to drink;  
And the apple trees are laden with their  
red, red globes and golden,  
And I see the fellows playing as they  
used to play with me,  
And the amber colored sunshine, as in  
merry days and olden,  
Comes like largess flung from heaven  
through the branches of the tree.

Comes like largess flung from heaven, and  
I sigh where I am sitting  
With the autumn all about me, for  
there's silver on my hair,  
And my heart calls to the shadows of the  
old days round me flitting,  
And my ears hark for a hailing that  
comes not from anywhere;  
Oh, heigh-oh, I'm old; I'm leaning like the  
trees my father, felling  
In the forests 'way off yonder, in the  
sunny lands and good,  
Brought to earth; and in my bosom there's  
a voice insistent telling  
I am marked for early resting like the  
old trees in the wood.

It is good, the thought of resting, it is good,  
the thought of going  
'Way out yonder where the voices of  
the old days call to me;  
For methinks I'll hear the laughter of the  
old days, and the blowing  
Of old springtime-laden breezes through  
the blossom-laden tree;



And I'll lay by as a garment this old husk  
of my soul's fretting,  
And I'll set out on the journey with a  
lilting soul and free,  
And they'll run, I know, to meet me for  
their souls know no forgetting,  
And we'll laugh and talk and chatter  
like the boys we used to be.

## AT THE SINKING OF THE SUN

**A**RE you happy with the happiness  
That none but daddies know?  
In your singing repertoire  
Have you got a by-o-lo?  
Can you sit still in the evening  
And hear the glad pit-a-pat  
Of the bare feet of a baby  
Hunting where its daddy's at,  
Till it finds you sitting lonely  
And climbs up onto your knee  
In its nightie, just as happy  
As a baby ought to be?  
If you haven't got this pleasure  
At the sinking of the sun  
You have missed a lot of happiness,  
You're out a lot of fun.

If you haven't got a baby  
You can tousle on the floor  
Till its mother says: "Be careful,"  
And the baby gasps for more,  
If you haven't got a baby  
That will ride a-pick-a-pack  
Hanging to your ears or whiskers  
While it sits astride your back,  
If you haven't got a baby  
That will urge you up the stairs,  
That will fairly shake with chuckles  
When you hurdle over chairs  
You may think your life worth living,  
But you'll know before its done  
You've been running on a side-track  
And have missed a pile of fun.

It's a little bit of baby  
At the end of every day,  
It's a little bit of baby  
With its little baby way  
Climbing to the knees of daddy  
With its little baby charms,  
With its mouth a-pout for kisses,  
With its dimpled, necklaced arms,

Makes the jolts and jars of living,  
All the worries that annoy;  
Just the way that leads to gladness,  
Just the way that leads to joy;  
And you'll bear them never thinking  
Till the working day is done,  
For the night-time "Now-I-lay-me,"  
And the scrambling and the fun.

## IN THE MORNING

**J**UST a happy, childish treble, lifting,  
    lilting down the way;  
Just a burst of happy laughter where the  
    little children play;  
Just a squeal, and then a man's voice, in a  
    laughing: "Upseday!"  
    Just some little babies playing in the  
        morning.

Just a father with his children swinging in  
    an old rope swing,  
Swinging high to feel the pleasure of their  
    little hands a-cling;  
How their voices lilt and gurgle, how their  
    happy accents ring;  
    Just some little babies playing in the  
        morning.

Just an earth-floored, cozy playground  
    'neath a gnarly liveoak tree;  
Just some little folks pretending they have  
    got some friends to tea;  
Just some brown-eyed, blue-eyed babies  
    dignified as they can be;  
    Just some little babies playing in the  
        morning.

Just a something good to live for; just a  
    balm for every smart,  
Just wee baby hands, all dimpled, shaping  
    up a fellow's heart;  
Just a dad a-stoop for kisses when the time  
    had come to part;  
Just some little babies playing in the  
    morning.

Just one more strong push together, one  
    more cry of: "Upseday!"  
Then the place is all deserted where the  
    little children play;  
They are at the gate and throwing daddy-  
    kisses down the way;  
    Just some little babies playing in the  
        morning.

## TENDER-SWEET

**I**F you use a little lovin' and you use a  
little song,  
You will find your world is never gonna go  
so very wrong;  
If you spread a little kindness on the other  
man's distress,  
If you use a little sweetness and a little  
tenderness,  
If you stoop some times to sort of lift  
another feller's load,  
If you do a little dance-step as you go along  
the road,  
You will find that all of these things you  
have found the time to do  
In some happy form or other will come  
laughin' back at you.

That's a pretty good religion; that's the  
kind the Master tried;  
He just chose a way of kindness and of  
sweetness, and He died  
Hanging on the rough spikes, piercing  
through His tender hands and feet,  
And through all that He had suffered still  
His smile was tender-sweet;  
And the way His hurt feet walked in is an  
open way to you,  
But no spikes await you in it; and each  
tender thing you do  
To the fellows all about you in the way you  
go along,  
Will come back to you in laughin' and in  
lovin' and in song.



## HAS ANYBODY LOST TWO CATS?

**H**AS anybody lost two cats? Us hopes  
nobody ain't,  
Because two baby cats is here; and they  
was thest as faint  
As they could be when they first came to  
our back yard that day,  
And so us feeded them, we did, and they  
won't go away;  
But mamma says that they ain't not our  
little cats, at all;  
And so us hides them in the shed when  
peoples comes to call,  
And one of us stays there with them so's  
they'll be sure an' stay,  
And does not let them out until the callers  
goes away.

And when it's me I hold them tight, and  
peek out through a crack  
And watch them till they go away and hope  
they won't come back;  
My mamma says that probably nobody  
wants them much,  
She says there is so many cats nobody cares  
for such;  
But us tells her us cares for cats, at least-  
ways for these two,  
Us don't think no one cares for cats as  
much as usses do;  
For these is speshul kinds of cats, and they  
can almost sing,  
And they've got whiskers and a tail and  
legs, and ever'thing!

Our mamma says that maybe someone had  
these cats, and they  
Did not want these and took them in a bag  
an' come away  
And putted them in our yard; and my  
mamma says that she  
Would like to have my father catch them  
doin' that, they'd see!

And she seems kind of fussy, but the cats  
don't seem to mind,  
And usses thinks whoever left them here  
was very kind;  
And the cats both is fat, and goes with us  
'most ever'where,  
And both their tails sticks right straight up  
from them into the air.

I wish I had a million cats, an' sister wishes,  
too;  
Us has had these cats quite a while, and  
they are good as new!  
And fatter than when they first come; if  
we'd a million we  
Would give them milkman's milk till they  
were fat as they could be,  
And we would train them till they would  
go with us everywhere—  
A million—with a million tails stuck right  
up in the air.  
These is our cats! Now, ain't they fat?  
An' ain't they long an' wide!  
But 'scuse us someone's comin', an' us  
gotta go an' hide.

## TRYING TO EXPRESS IT

**I** COULD hop up on a twig  
If I wasn't so dern big,  
An' I wasn't so dern stout,  
An' as homely as git-out,  
An' just sing an' sing an' sing,  
Sing out glad as everything;  
Sometimes my soul seems to buzz  
Like an auto's gizzard does,  
Just for gladness! Swear I could!  
Ain't the old world glad and good?

Ain't the old world glad and good,  
Once you get it understood?  
I ketch myself wishin' that  
I could purr just like a cat;  
I'm so glad sometimes I feel  
Like a pig does; I could squeal,

I'm so glad! Skies are so blue,  
Winds so sweet an' hearts so true,  
That, I say—'f I wa'n't so big  
I'd just hop up on a twig!

Sometimes, when things starts to rip  
I just pinch my lower lip  
'Twixt my fingers, this-away,  
An' don't have a word to say;  
Never open up my face;  
Then, somewheres about the place  
An old mocker lilts a tune  
Sweeter than the soul of June.  
And a fleck o' sunshine falls  
On my patched old overalls.

Then the wind stirs in the trees;  
And the hum o' honeybees  
Comes to me; an' far away  
Comes the smell of new-mown hay;  
And the skys keeps gittin' blue  
And someone yells: "Peek-a-boo!"  
Or a baby, hid somewhere  
Laughs, an' there ain't no more care;  
And my glad soul starts to buzz  
Like an auto's innards does.

## 'NOOKIE KNEW,

**I** WENT to ride with "'Nookie," just the  
other night, and she  
Was about as wriggle-twisty as a little girl  
could be;  
For one moment she'd be sitting right  
beside me on the seat,  
And next moment she'd be up and dancing  
gaily on her feet;  
And, it seemed to me, just trying to spill  
out into the road,  
And I'd grab her and I'd tell her: "Sit  
down there, you little toad!"  
But she'd hop up in a moment with a gur-  
gle-goo of glee,  
And the mischief in her blue eyes would be  
peeping out at me.

Then I tried to interest her, and asked, as  
we went along,  
If she was the little girl that I had heard  
could sing a song;  
And she tuned up in a moment, her song  
was of "little feet,"  
And she cautioned them "be tateful" and  
her voice was mighty sweet;  
And it rippled and it whispered, like the  
night wind in the trees,  
And was sweeter than the buzzing of the  
laden honey-bees;  
It flowed sweeter than the streamlet o'er its  
sunlit pebbles flows;  
But her feet were not too careful, for one  
hit me on the nose!

Then I asked her when she'd finished, and  
we'd had enough of that,  
(Of the kicking, not the singing) Tell me:  
"Have you got a cat?"  
Don't tell me I'm not a wizard picking out  
a subject! She  
Turned the glory and the gladness of her  
blue eyes onto me,

And she snuggled up and told me of a  
mother-cat she had,  
And the very talking of it seemed to make  
her more than glad;  
And she told me what she called her, and  
she told me she was sweet,  
And she said that when she teased her she  
had stickers on her feet.

And then she spoke of the kittens, there  
were four of them in all,  
And they'd chase her through the parlor,  
and romp with her in the hall;  
And one of them was named "Stinny,"  
and one "Fatty," and one "Pig,"  
And the other, little bit of kitten that was  
not so big,  
Was named "Pussy-Foot," and always,  
she said with her voice of song,  
Or most always, when she went out all her  
cats would go along;  
And she'd hug them up tight to her, and  
they'd sing—she meant they'd purr—  
And what wouldn't sing I wonder snug-  
gled in the arms of her!



Then I told her she was charming and I  
whispered to her that  
I was glad she had the kittens, glad she  
had the mother-cat;  
Then I asked her what the kittens had on  
them; I questioned her  
Wondering if she'd say hair, or, if she  
knew and would say, "fur,"  
And she clapped her hands, and gladness  
shone out of her eyes of blue,  
And I knew in that one moment, as she  
looked up, that she knew!  
And she caught me by the ears and stood  
right up there on my knees,  
And she rubbed her nose on my nose and  
she told me they had "Fleas!"

## AN INTERESTING DIZEEZ

**I**T ain't no fun this bein' sick and lyin'  
here like this;

My mother says that I ain't got 'fantile  
paralysis,

'Cause I can move my toes, and move my  
fingers, this-a-way;

If I had it I'd lay right still in bed day  
after day

An' couldn't even turn at all, and couldn't  
move my toes,

And couldn't hold my handkerchief to help  
me blow my nose;

It must be funny for a kid to be laid out  
that flat;

I wonder why God goes and makes diseeziz  
such as that?

My father, which is very smart, and reads  
'most every night

Books with the longest words in them,  
    which he pernounces right,  
Says folks are made like telephones, and  
    central is your head,  
And everywhere through all of you the  
    nerves like wires is spread;  
And this 'fantile paralysis which some-  
    times comes to town  
Is like a storm which breaks the wires, and  
    mebby throws them down  
So central can't communicate with fingers  
    or with toes,  
Or legs or arms or anything, to tell them  
    how they goes.

My father he is very smart, and things is  
    like he said;  
And my brain's like a little man a-settin'  
    in my head,  
A-phonin' me the way to go, and to turn  
    out for chairs,  
And phonin' my feet how to go when I  
    start for upstairs;  
And this 'fantile paralysis is when the  
    wires is down,

Like that there last big storm we had  
smashed them all over town  
And made the phones go dead; I'm glad  
that I have not got that!  
It's tough enough to be plain sick and  
lyin' where I'm at.

Since God has made us that-a-way he otto  
made some men,  
Some teentsy men with climbers on, to  
make us well again;  
They could come climbin' up our legs, and  
climb in through our ears,  
And fix our wires so we would not have  
that dizeez for years;  
And when they got us fixed one could call  
from our little toe,  
To Central 'way up in our head, and say,  
"Hello! Hello!  
Ring your bell, Central, till I see if this  
here kid's all right"—  
But I ain't got it; what I got's from green  
plums et last night.

## AT THE FARM

**M**Y grandpa, he ain't got much hair except just by his ears,  
And he has lived in this here world for  
years and years and years;  
And he leans on the fence and smiles when  
he looks down at me,  
He says I'm such a little girl as gran'ma  
used to be;  
But it don't seem like grandmas could have  
been just little girls;  
My grandma's face is wrinkled and she's  
got the whitest curls  
I ever saw, but he showed me a picture  
of her, and  
She was a little girl and had a gold ring on  
her hand.

The picture is on glass, and it's in a gold  
velvet frame,  
And grandpa said it was—I guess I can not  
say the name,  
But it was an old-fashioned kind they  
made when he was small;  
But I would not be proud of it if I had it  
at all.  
I've got a better picture of myself, as big  
as me!  
With yellow curls and with blue eyes, and  
pretty like I be;  
I'm glad that grandma is growed up, and  
grandpa growed up, too,  
I could not love them quite so much if  
they was both so new.

Folks get more kind as they get old; my  
grandpa is so kind  
That chickens, colts and calves and pigs  
all lag along behind  
When he walks out around the place; and  
on one warm day he  
Was feelin' sleepy so he sat down by an  
ellum tree

And went to sleep; he says he just stopped  
for a little nap,  
And Molly's colt loved him so much it laid  
down in his lap!  
And when he woke and hollered the colt  
stepped on him, and he  
Had to send for a doctor and he had an  
awful knee.

But he's all right again, and laughs, and  
says he'll have some chap  
Kodak him sometime with a horse a-settin'  
on his lap;  
And then he lifts me up and we go where  
red clover grows  
And bees are buzzin', and the smell's on  
every breeze that blows;  
And when he finds a great thick patch of  
it he puts me down,  
And says he don't know what he'll do when  
I go back to town;  
But I tell him not to feel bad, that when  
I am away  
I'll write him notes with kisses in and send  
them every day.

## WHEN BABE HOLLERS PEEK-A-BOO

**W**HEN babe hollers peek-a-boo, then  
her mother's hiding, too, and her  
grandma's peekin' through  
Fingers interlaced;  
And her grandpa ducks his head under-  
neath the tablespread, and her happy  
dad has fled—  
Fled, in headlong haste,  
For a nook just anywhere, underneath the  
parlor stair, or beneath a near-by  
chair,  
Any kind of nook,  
So it's not so far away as to keep him from  
the play, and each one is hoping they  
Will get the first look.



For when baby walks around, tippytoe  
without a sound, till some hiding one  
when found,

Loudly hollers: "Boo!"

Then there's doings at our shack when the  
baby scuttles back, and your ear-  
drums would 'most crack

With the loud halloo;

And she's caught and roundly kissed, dim-  
pled chin and creasy wrist, rounded  
cheek and chubby fist,

Kissed and kissed again;

Everybody takes their toll, grandpa ducks  
his shining poll, grandma whispers:  
"Bless her soul!"

And she's happy then.

Of a sudden, though her: "Boo!" sends  
them swiftly scuttling to some place  
where they can peek through,

Watching every turn

Of the baby as she seeks, as she tippytoes  
and peeks, starry eyes and rosy  
cheeks;

He would need be stern

Who could sit unmoved through all, hide  
and seek, and find and call, who her  
happy childish thrall  
Could not, would not feel;  
When a human gets too old, too self-cen-  
tered or too cold, to a babe's form  
long to hold,  
Or enjoy its squeal,

Then it's time for him to hie out, far out,  
beneath the sky, where white clouds  
and wild birds fly,  
Knowing woe nor ruth,  
And lie close to nature's breast, just to  
feel her moods, and rest by the sum-  
mer winds caressed  
And renew his youth;  
Get afar from gold and bonds, out among  
the swaying fronds of cool ferns by  
shady ponds,  
Till he feels a tug  
Of old nature at his heart, causing it to  
bound and start, causing it to long  
and smart,  
For a babe to hug.

## IN THE NIGHT

**A** MOCKING BIRD waked me up last  
night;

He was perchin' out where the moon was  
bright.

An' I think a mockin' bird must have sung  
That kind of a song when the world was  
young,

An' the trees was young, and the hills, an'  
streams,

An' love was young with its laughs an'  
dreams;

He waked me up with the overflow  
From his joyous heart; an' I didn't know  
What it was that roused me, at first, an' I  
Tried to settle back with a drowsy sigh.

But would he let me? No sir! his call  
Came through the window, and hit the  
wall,

Went through the door, and went down  
the stair,  
An' into all of the corners, where  
No music ever had been before;  
Then he sung louder, an' sung some more;  
An' I waked up, an' I thought, "Gee whiz!  
He's a stemwinder, that feller is!"  
An' I left the bed, an' pulled a chair  
Before the winder, an' sot me there.

I sot right there for the better part  
Of the night, whilst he spilled out his heart;  
The world was asleep; all the winders dark,  
An' there wasn't no one but me to hark;  
An' the poplars stuck up ag'in' the sky,  
An' the moon was big as a homemade pie,  
An' I was a-hearin' a concert worth—  
Why, there ain't no tellin'! No one on  
earth,  
Not Tetrazzini, could sing like that;  
So I dranked it in, and sat and sat.

An' there was a song of the long ago,  
An' a little boy with a stonebruised toe,  
An' a river-road, an' a windin' stream,

An' a covered bridge, an' a boyish dream,  
An' a wispy girl with blue eyes ashine,  
An' two names were carved on a tall old  
    pine;

An' there was glee, an' a world o' hope,  
Then a wee grave on a sun-warmed slope,  
An' then an ache, an' a broken heart,  
An' a pain so keen that tears would start.

Then in the tune I heard him sing,  
The world and life seemed a little thing;  
I seemed so little I swept along  
Up, up, up, up, on a gust of song;  
The world grew little, an' off as far—  
Far as the littlest, tiniest star;  
Life's sorrows dwindled an' faded, too,  
Heaven was near an' the skies was blue;—  
The song died down to a little cheep,  
An' mornin' found me right there, asleep.

## BACK TO REALITIES

**W**HEN the new moon is round, an'  
gold as a new pat o' butter;  
An' candlebugs are doin' stunts, and black  
bats flitter-flutter  
Into the porch an' out again, an' there's a  
far off mooin'  
Of cattle in the medder-lot, then there ain't  
nothin' doin'  
If you are settin' all alone, but jest to go  
a-dreamin'  
Of walks jest wide enough for two, an'  
silver ripples gleamin'  
As they come rushin' to the shore with  
the night breezes after,  
Like happy kids would, an' bust there with  
little lilts o' laughter.  
  
There's nothin' doin' then, but jest to sort  
o' set an' listen

Back in the shadders where the big moon-  
flowers nod an' glisten;  
An' pretty soon, away far-off, you'll hear  
glad hoofbeats drummin',  
An' by the feelin' in your heart you'll  
know the dreams are comin';  
An' you will go to meet 'em, an' come with  
them through the flowing  
Clear waters at the ford, an' go wherever  
they are going—  
You would not let the dreams go past an'  
go their ways without you—  
An' first you know, the shapes o' dreams  
are dancin' all about you.

One is the boy you chummed with when  
life's paths were all before you;  
Jest harum-scarum boyish chums, with  
blue skies archin' o'er you;  
An' you loved one another, too, but he  
stopped way back yonder,  
An' in amongst your dreams you sit with  
a hurt heart, and ponder  
The question you oft ask yourself, you with  
the years grown mellow,



If he, beyond the farthest star, is still the  
little fellow  
You used to know an' love, or if he's still  
been growin', growin',  
So that your wrinkles an' gray hair won't  
put you past his knowin'.

An' then a laugh within the house, a glee-  
ful pitter-patter,  
An' rushin' little white-robed forms send  
all your dreams a-scatter!  
An' babies romp onto your knees, to say  
their, "Now I lay me,"  
An' all the thin dream shapes are gone;  
and fades out laughin' Jamie,  
The comrade of your boyish pranks, an'  
you are left a-holdin'  
A bunch o' babies that care not for fumin'  
or for scoldin';  
Because they know it's all a joke. Dreams  
of old days are pleasin',  
But laughin', lovin' babies are far better  
worth one's squeezin'.



## BACK AGAIN FOR ME

**I** THINK I'd best pack up my duds and  
tell the town good-by,  
And leave the pall of smoke behind; and,  
out beneath the sky,  
Go off along the country road, the wind-  
ing road I know,  
I came along so bravely just a little year  
ago;  
Go back to the broad meadow, to the call-  
ing of the stream,  
The little room beneath the eaves in which  
I used to dream,  
The birdsong of a morning, and the sweet  
scent of the pine,  
And all the joys that wait out there for me  
to call them mine.

The smoke's so dark above me that I can  
not see the stars;  
I want to see the cattle stand a-callin' at  
the bars;  
I want to wake at morning with the old  
familiar sounds,  
And not the slammin', bangin' as the milk-  
man makes his rounds;  
I want the smell of clover makin' all the  
noonday sweet;  
I am weary, weary, weary of the clinging  
asphalt street,  
And I will be more happy than I was a  
year ago  
If I can walk at starlight with a maid I  
used to know.

The city girls are diff'rent, they are thin  
and ground by toil;  
They are weary every evening of the day-  
long stress and toil;  
Their poor cheeks are so hollow, and their  
eyes such somber wells—  
Oh, I'm bound to leave the city, and its  
reeking shops and hells!

And I'm goin' to the country where the  
fields are wide and green,  
And no smoke-clouds hide the heavens,  
and the winds are cool and clean,  
And the girls are plump and happy, with  
their hair in ribbon-bows,  
And they dimple into laughter, and their  
cheeks are like the rose.

I have had my year-long lesson, and it's  
back again for me!  
To the gladness of the hill-tops, to the  
spring beneath the tree;  
To the high blue sky at noontime; and at  
night the blinking stars,  
And the cattle standing calling, in the  
evenin' by the bars;  
I've had my fill of the city, and I want the  
clover-bloom,  
And the winding country highway, and the  
honeybee's ba-zoom;  
I will trade the mighty city, with its shops  
and streets aglow,  
For the glinting eyes and laughter of a  
country girl I know.

## CLIMBERS

**T**HE road gits ruther warmish an' it's  
climbin' all the time;  
But we ought to be a-thankin' God we've  
got the strength to climb;  
When there's boulders in the pathway that  
we have to work around,  
When we've passed a bit o' goin' that we  
feared would get us downed,  
When the slippin' an' the slidin' of the  
slopes are passed and by,  
We should sing a song o' gladness that we  
had the heart to try;  
'Course the road was steep and warmish,  
an' we had to climb an' crawl,  
But the road goes always upward that leads  
anywhere at all.

Course the grime an' sweat of climbin' an'  
the weariness was great;  
Course we sometimes felt the longin' to  
set in the shade an' wait  
Till the gentle evenin' breezes brought a  
coolness to our cheek;  
But if we're amongst the winners, we kept  
pluggin' at the peak  
Till it kept a-growin' nearer, an', almost  
before we knew,  
We was reachin' for the blossoms that  
stood out ag'in the blue,  
We was settin' in the shadow listenin'  
to the gentle croon  
Of the wild birds, an' a-breathin' in the  
sweet perfume o' June.

If you're on the road a-climbin', or have  
reached the very top—  
But you haven't—thank the Maker there  
ain't any place to stop;  
If you lived through all the ages there  
would still be heights to climb;  
There would be a little something that  
you could do all the time;

There would be a weaker brother who must  
tote a bigger load;  
There might be a weaker sister who was  
laggin' in the road;  
It might be just a wee baby separated from  
its dad,  
Waitin' for your arms to squeeze it, an'  
your kiss to make it glad.

So, however dust is blowin', so, however  
steep the ways,  
Though the road gits ruther warmish in the  
peltin' of the rays,  
If you keep head up, eyes forward, to the  
line ag'in the skies  
You will find the perspiration will not run  
into your eyes;  
If you slow up to be helpin' someone else  
to make the climb,  
You won't notice the road's roughness nor  
its danger, half the time;  
And the joy of every boulder you climb  
over, by and by  
Will keep you a-thankin' Heaven that you  
had the strength to try.

## THE HILLS

**T**HERE'S nothing so good as the hill-  
tops that rise  
Till they're covered with snow and tints of  
the skies  
Lie on 'em; there's nothin' so good as they  
are!  
I look o'er the miles to the hills where they  
are,  
Like sentinels standin' ag'in' the blue skies,  
And hot tears of longin' well into my eyes.  
The hills! oh, the hills, with their summits  
of snow!  
Their scars and their chasms I never may  
know;  
And God's in the mountains! His voice is  
the tone  
Of torrents down tearing by shoulder and  
stone.

The hills! Oh, the hills! The snow-capped  
hills for mine!

The bare rocky peaks far above the last  
pine!

The white virgin snow where no man ever  
trod!

The peaks and the silences vibrant of God!  
Above all the toil and the stress and the  
strife,

The petty small threads that are woven in  
life,

The sorrow and heartache, the stress and  
the care,

The ages-old woman with grey in her hair  
Who begs on the corner, the bandit who  
lurks

To spoil of his earnings his fellow who  
works.

The hills! Oh, the hills, with their mantles  
of snow!

Their heaven-born winds and their tor-  
rents that flow

And call through the silence uproarious  
and far,



And fling around boulder and barrier and  
bar,  
Until they go laughing and careless and  
free  
Down smooth level highways that lead to  
the sea;  
The hills are all white and the hills are  
all clean,  
And only the valleys and lowlands are  
mean;  
The hills are God's highways; man walks  
on the plain,  
An atom, soul-shackled, bowed down in  
his chain.

And yet, if I could would I leave it and go,  
Climb up to the hills from the valleys be-  
low,  
Climb up to the silences, icy and vast,  
Leave men I have fought with, the men I  
have passed  
With laughter and hail as we journeyed  
along,  
The beggar I helped with a lilt and a song,

The beggar below on the corner, whose  
eyes

Unseeing, seem always to gaze on the  
skies?

Leave the toil and the strife, the resting  
and glee?

No! the hills are for God; the valleys for  
me!

## THE BABY WHO ROMPED WITH DAD

**O** H, little girl, with the braids grown  
long,

And the laughing lips and heart of song,  
And the slim cool hands, each night you  
wait

As you once did by the arbored gate,  
But when your daddy turns in the street  
No more you scamper on dancing feet,  
With wind-blown curls, and your arms  
out, so,

As you did ever so long ago.

Now you stand waiting him, tall and  
and straight

And self-possessed; and you swing the  
gate

To let him through, and you tippytoe  
For his kiss, and arm in arm you go

Up the long walk where the red rose bends,  
Each rose on its stalk and you are friends,  
You smile at the world, and it looks glad;  
But where is the baby who romped with  
dad?

Where is the babe with her rush and shout,  
Her hair blown wild, and her arms held  
out;

With the wee hurt where she slipped and  
fell

Which but the kiss of her dad made well?  
She stands wide-eyed with her lips apart,  
Her hands clasped over her fluttered heart;  
With fluffy curls in a shining strand,  
And gazes into the grown-up land.

And just last evening a tall youth stood  
By the gate with her; the distant wood  
Shone green and gold in the setting sun;  
A bird in its shady depths, just one,  
Trilled a low note to departing day;  
She stood and watched when he turned  
away;

Then ran, arms wide, where her father  
    smiled,  
And clung to him like a little child.

He knew; and, knowing, his eyes grew  
    dim,  
How much that loving was meant for him;  
That night he stood by her snowy bed  
As she slept, one arm 'neath her little head,  
And thought long thoughts, and his heart  
    was sad  
For the wee girl who had run to dad  
With a glad shout on those far off nights,  
For kiss-healed bruises and pillow-fights.

## A SYMPHONY IN THE MAKING

**G**OD is planning greater wonders, as a  
player o'er the keys,  
Going thoughtfully and slowly brings the  
world new melodies,  
As a dreamer, eyes before him, through  
starvation, hurt, and ruth,  
Brings his dream where men may grasp it,  
hold it, know it for the truth,  
God is picking through the ages from the  
hearts of vibrant strings  
Things but yesterday unthought of, what  
to-day are undreamed things;  
And the world grows ever better, cries  
grow fainter, die away,  
As the eyes of stumbling mortals catch  
the dawning of the day.

As musicians build their music, toning,  
cutting out discord,  
So the work goes on forever in the work-  
shop of the Lord;  
The whole universe His keyboard, planets  
far beyond our ken  
And beyond them other planets, and then  
more as far again,  
And, twice farther, other planets; each has  
some place in the score;  
Though the throbbing comes but faintly, if  
we listen more and more,  
If we tune our ears to catch it, it shall come  
near and more near:  
If our hearts are kept unsullied and we  
hearken we shall hear.

Till in time all men shall hear it come tri-  
umphant to their ears,  
Through the interstellar spaces catch the  
music of the spheres;  
And the weeping of the children, and the  
grieving of the sad,  
And the moan of those who hunger, and  
the growl of men made mad

By the grinding and the squeezing of the  
cruel hands of greed  
Shall be hushed to catch the music; and  
whatever god or creed  
Men may have, if they but labor with their  
eyes turned to the dawn  
They shall step forth into glory when the  
darker days are gone.

Those who trample on their passions, turn  
their backs on lust and greed;  
Men who turn to help a brother who is  
crying in his need;  
Men who help to take the babies from the  
spindle and the loom  
To wide fields where summer breezes stir  
the blossoms to perfume;  
Men who govern them with loving, who  
protect the baby limbs  
From the thoughtless blow are helping  
shape the gladdest of God's hymns;  
They are teaching love, are treading where  
the spike-pierced feet have trod;  
They are helpers to the Master; they're in  
partnership with God.



And it all shall roll together, throb to-  
gether, reach above,  
Up to where the Great Musician with more  
than men know of love  
Lets his hands glide o'er the keyboard till  
he finds the sought-for tune  
Sweeter than the smell and gladness of ten  
million years of June;  
And men, soul attuned, shall hear it com-  
ing faintly to their ears;  
Though the very sweetness of it may suf-  
fuse their eyes with tears,  
Yet the tears shall be of gladness, gushing  
from long hidden springs;  
Love, just love, may touch the keyboard,  
love, just love, vibrate the strings.

## A SIGN

**T**HE work ain't goin' so good, some-  
how.

I heard a whistle an' looked just now,  
An'—well, I pushed all my work aside;  
The city's streets were as big an' wide  
As the prairies were, an' buildings tall  
Had dwindled till they wa'n't there at all;  
The magic of it was something queer  
For, for the moment I was not here.

I turned my head when I heard the sound,  
And my eyes lit, an' I looked around,  
An' after searchin' I seen him there,  
With a sunburned neck an' brick-dust hair,  
An' his smudgy face, an' freckled nose,  
An' his ragged pants, an' eager pose,  
With his eyes alight, and feet apart—  
I loved him so it most hurt my heart.

He held his fingers up, this-a-way,  
Like I held my fingers yesterday,  
Just held them up, like two rabbit ears,  
And them an' the whistle knocked the  
years

Plum off of me; as they slipped aside  
I was a kid, an' as eager-eyed  
As the kid there on the corner was;  
It hits folks funny, remembrance does.

As I stepped out of the years ag'in,  
With a boyish heart an' face a-grin,  
I stuffed my fingers into my mouth  
And the soft wind from the blossomed  
south

Caught my call, shrill as it used to be,  
An' Redhead heard it an' looked at me;  
I raised two fingers an' signed to him  
That I'd play hooky an' go an' swim.

And then the boy in the ragged clothes  
Stuck his small thumb 'gainst his snubby  
nose,

An' wiggled his fingers, so; an' you  
Can bet I knew what that sign meant, too;

An' then he stuck out his tongue, he did,  
The derved little, redhead, smudge-faced  
kid!

And then the city came back once more,  
With all its rattle and rush and roar.

And years came back as he turned away,  
And work came back, and the streaks of  
gray

Came back again in my thinning hair;  
I looked again and he wasn't there,  
The redhead kid with the sign I knew,  
That meant: "Go swimmin'?" to me an'  
you

When we was kids, but that sign an' smile  
Had made me glad for a little while.

## LUCK, THAT'S ALL

**I**T ain't good sense to raise your head an'  
tell what you would do  
If things that's happened to your friends  
would happen-up to you;  
It ain't good sense to scorn another feller  
if he falls,  
There ain't no tellin' what you'll do if the  
fool-killer calls;  
An' if a feller strays aside into a crooked  
way  
You oughtn't point him out at all, nor have  
a word to say;  
You ought to thank your lucky stars it  
wa'n't you jumped the track,  
An' give the other chap a lift an' try to  
coax him back.

For when it comes to stubbin' toes the last  
word's never said,

An' no man can be sure he's safe until he's  
safely dead;  
Nobody wants to leave the straight to go  
the crooked way;  
There wasn't ever anyone that pined to  
go astray;  
Some fellers can't go head held up an' lilt  
a bit o' song  
An' laugh temptation down the wind;  
some fellers ain't so strong,  
Perhaps, as you have proved yourself; but,  
when the best is said,  
You ain't so sure you're strong yourself  
until you're safe an' dead.

That's why you ought to, when you run  
across a derelict,  
Someone whose life is full of falls, whose  
soul is scarred and nicked,  
Go up an' slap him on the back and give  
him howdy-do,  
An' thank the God that made you both the  
falls were not for you;  
For he was weak where you are strong;  
be tender when you speak,

For everybody's coat of mail has got a spot  
that's weak;  
An' that yours hasn't been found out don't  
prove it can't be struck;  
The only thing it proves at all is that you've  
been in luck.

## ALL OF THE TIME

**A**LL of this life is a lovable joke;  
Sleep through it, eat through it, drink  
through it, smoke,  
Laugh through it, love through it, dance  
through it, sing—  
Any old way it's a lovable thing!  
Walk through it, crawl through it, auto  
along,  
Ever and always it bubbles with song!

Always the sun on a hill or a tree,  
Always a baby that gurgles with glee,  
Always a mother a baby makes glad,  
Always somewhere there's a home-coming  
dad,  
Always someone flings a beggar a dime—  
Lovable, life is, and all of the time.



Blind? There are songs filled with love for  
your ears,  
Heart notes which only the blinded one  
hears.  
Deaf? You can sing as you go down the  
way,  
Songs in your heart of the glad yesterday;  
Loved ones about you to press to your  
side—  
It's lovable, life, however you're tried.  
Deaf, dumb, and blind? There's a lovable  
squeeze  
The mortal who hears, who talks, and who  
sees  
Can't gauge the joy of, when it goes about  
Your shoulders. You know your heart  
gives a shout,  
And throbs with a gladness that makes it  
expand—  
A lovable life? All of it; and grand!  
Poor? Then God's pictures are hung on  
the skies;  
Hues of God's blossoms are free for your  
eyes;

Streams sing for you, and the night comes  
with sleep—

You've not a vault to watch over and  
keep—

You can laugh, love and sleep; romp, run,  
and climb;

Lovable, life is, and all of the time!

## GOOD FOR FARMERS

**T**HIS mornin' when I milked the cow,  
before I started off for town,  
I had to take her by the horns an' tail an'  
turn her upside down,  
An' milk her that way; yes sirree! it's  
rained so doggone much an' long  
I've ordered me a submarine. I tell you  
I'm a-gettin' strong  
For sunshine an' for dusty roads an' things  
like that, doggone the luck!  
Why, I ain't got a rooster that ain't wishin'  
he was hatched a duck;  
An' mud? There's mud on everything!  
There's mud on all my suits of clothes,  
An' I have paddled 'round so much I'm  
gettin' webs between my toes!  
But what makes me more doggone mad  
than anything makes me, I vow,

Is this here line of talk I hear: "This suits  
you farmers, anyhow."

"This suits you farmers!" Do folks think  
I'm runnin' me a frog-farm here,  
Or raisin' waterlilies? Say, some folks'  
idees are mighty queer!

Town folks think farmers got to have their  
farms wet down so they can wade!

I wonder if folks think that I am raisin'  
tadpoles for the trade?

If it keeps rainin' this-a-way a little longer,  
garden truck

Won't do for me, I'll have to go to plantin'  
eels, or buy a duck;

And have to trade my cows and horse and  
all such things, it makes me fuss,

And go somewhere where I can get a herd  
of hippopotamus.

The water is so doggone deep that all the  
bull-frogs has been treed,

An' cattle has to ketch their breath and  
dive to get a bit of feed.

An' wife can't get to go to town to shop,  
an' the kid's eyes are full o' tears;  
The water is so doggone deep the mules  
are breathin' through their ears!  
And still town folks say: "This is good for  
people livin' on the farm."  
That shows you how much sense they got!  
I ain't a-wishin' them no harm,  
Doggone their skins! but I would like to  
have them here with me a spell,  
An' make them help me do the chores;  
they wouldn't think I fared so well  
As they appear to think I do. Town folks  
do have the queer ideeas!  
I'm 'fraid I'll have to plant my corn up  
in the crotches of the trees;  
Why, just this mornin', 'fore I fixed to  
hitch and to drive into town,  
I had to swim to ketch the cow, and milk  
the critter upside down!

## HAPPY HEART

**M**AIDEN, with the parasol,  
Maiden, with the lilting call,  
Maiden, with the graceful poise,  
Maid with all of the glad world's joys  
Bubbling in your heart until  
Laughter seems to overspill  
From your eyes in glinting glee,  
You're a world of joy to me!

Yes you are! Your glinting eye  
As you daily pass me by,  
Drifting light as thistle-down,  
Seems to light up the old town;  
And the gladness of your smile  
Makes all work and life worth while.  
Just your glee and youth and grace  
Make the world a gladsome place.

Roses red and glories blue,  
They were all contrived for you;  
If I were a honey-bee,  
Don't you know, it seems to me  
I would dare death for a sip  
At your curved mischievous lip;  
Being but an old man, I  
Merely watch you drifting by.

What can people care at all  
For the mocker's lilting call?  
If God blessed me with a choice  
I would always hear your voice  
Lilting happily and free;  
That would be enough for me.  
All the joy life ever knew  
Bubbles in the heart of you.

## THOSE OLD DAYS BENEATH THE BOUGHS

**S**AY, do you recall the rock in the torrent where you played  
When a little bit o' boy? How the sycamore's wide shade  
Covered it an' made it cool in th' hottest kind o' day,  
How you used to, sprawled on it, let vacations drift away?  
How you builded castles tall that reached almost to the blue?  
But let's not recall the dreams, for so few of them came true;  
Let us not recall the dreams, far too grand for you and me,  
Let us only just go back to the days that used to be;



They were fairer than our dreams ever  
could be, ever were.

Those old days beneath the boughs where  
the branches used to stir.

Did you ever catch the crab, the big one  
that used to dwell

Underneath the sloping side of the rock  
you loved so well?

Have you ever gathered berries that half  
way could compare

With the red, luscious berries that you  
gathered 'way back there

On the slope above the stream, berries big  
an' wet with dew?

Do you ever taste a fruit whose rare flavor  
brings to you

Like a movin' picture scene, all the joys  
you used to know,

The big rock above the stream where you  
used to love to go,

An' the laughter of the boys 'way back  
there with whom you played,

An' almost knee-deep shallows where you  
used to love to wade?

Where you used to fish for minnows while  
waters used to swish,  
And you would sit there breathless, fear-  
ing lest you scare the fish;  
It was fun to throw your duds on the rock  
an' dare the tide,  
Almost deep enough to swim, an' to splash  
from side to side  
Playing tag, splashing water in the other  
fellows' eyes;  
Do you ever, sitting lonely, when daylight  
fades and dies  
See the road go winding round up the hill  
and far away  
To the home that waited you at the end of  
every day?  
Is the home that waited you up and over  
the big hill  
Lost to you forever, is a strange foot upon  
its sill?

And I wonder if you can, if you try, recall  
once more  
How you labored all one day till your  
hands were bruised and sore

With a rock and a big nail, till you'd  
    graven big and deep  
The initials of your name? Those initials  
    meant a heap  
To the boy away back there, the glad boy  
    you used to be,  
The wee boy who used to sprawl on the  
    rock beneath the tree;  
Have you ever had a longin' to go back  
    where you were,  
Where you carved your name that day,  
    where the branches used to stir?  
If you have, don't you do it! Keep the  
    memory as fair  
As it was when you were glad and a part  
    of it back there.

## ALL WELL

**B**EFORE Bill upped an' married an'  
left the old home farm  
I'm 'fraid that I was most too strict; there  
wasn't any harm,  
I don't suppose, in lettin' him take Molly,  
meetin' nights  
An' take his sweetheart ridin', when the  
rosy northern lights  
Was lightin' up the heavens, an' the old  
earth down below,  
An' makin' rosy flickers on the heaps o'  
drifted snow;  
But I never let him take her, an' it used to  
make him cross;  
I reckon I thought 'most too much o' that  
old Molly-hoss.

So—mother called him William, like the  
most o' mothers will,

Though to me an' all the hired hands his  
name was only Bill—  
Bill went his way, an' I went mine, th' way  
I'd made the start;  
An' day by day an' year by year we growed  
more far apart;  
An' when he took his girl out for a snug-  
glin' moonlight hike  
Across the hills he didn't git the hoss that  
he would like,  
But mostly took a plow-hoss, just a heavy  
ploddin' plug,  
Although I know a plow-hoss takes one  
safest through a hug.

An' now he's married. I declare! It's been  
almost a year!  
An' mother's settin' in the house, an' I'm  
a-settin' here  
An' feelin' sort of lonesome, sort of like  
I'd missed the mark.  
A-raisin' our one chicken—an' I'm headed  
toardst the dark,  
An' Bill'll get the farm some day, an' plow  
the furrows, too,

Across the fields I used to plow an' tried  
to plow so true;  
I guess I thought too much of all the fields  
I had to till,  
An' too much of ol' Molly-hoss, an' skurce  
enough o' Bill.

I oughter made a chum o' him, he can't  
care fur his dad,  
Or love me like he would've done, I reckon,  
if I had;  
I was plum wrong— Is that Bill's hoss  
a-comin' down the hill!  
Good heavens! Somethin's happened!  
God! don't let it be to Bill!  
Why, that's Bill's self a-drivin'—like his  
coattails was afire!  
Good gracious! Don't that youngster think  
that hosses never tire?  
What's that? You've got a baby! And  
you've named it after me?  
You did—why, Bill!—I didn't think—  
I'm proud as I kin be!

## GOING BACK

**S**OME day I'll fill up my pipe an' slip  
into an old coat an' go  
Until I come to a little town, a little old  
town I know;  
Where the dusty road winds round an'  
down an' comes to a burblin' stream  
An' trees 'way off on the distant hills are  
touched by the sunset gleam  
Until their green takes the hue of gold, an'  
out of the distance still  
Comes the faint note of the nightbird's  
call, the plaint of the whippoorwill;  
An' there I'll meet the friends I knew in  
the days that are past an' gone;  
The boys, they're ruther old boys today,  
I met at the gates o' dawn.

There wasn't one in the old home town but  
    who was as close as kin;  
I never knocked at a door back there, I  
    whistled an' went right in;  
An' there were cookies, I taste them now,  
    the mothers o' those days made;  
They always kept them on hand for boys,  
    an' there was a creek to wade,  
An' barns an' lofts where a boy could romp  
    an' put in a rainy day,  
Or sneak a copy of Deadwood Dick to read  
    on the smelly hay;  
An' so I'm thinkin' I'll go back there, to  
    the old home town sometime,  
Where I know each song of the bouldered  
    creek, an' there is a hill to climb.

An' I will slip off the train back there, an'  
    mix with the old time crowd,  
An' get my name in the paper, too; an'  
    maybe I won't be proud!  
That's been my aim for these many years,  
    to get in the old home sheet;  
"One of our home boys," it will say, an'  
    each friend o' my youth I meet



Will say: "I seen you was back in town  
in an editorial; say,  
By jing, old feller, it seems to me you're  
gettin' a little gray!"  
An' that will be by way of a joke; I'll  
laugh as I used to do;  
But it ain't much of a joke, because I know  
in my heart it's true.

## MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

**'T** WERE fine upon these July nights  
to wander far away,  
To leave the work and worry and the cares  
of every day,  
To leave the town behind one and go out  
where winds are cool,  
To where a tree throws shadows deep  
across a bayou pool,  
And there lie prone upon the grass and  
watch the stars come out  
Where only just the noises of the night  
are all about,  
And candle-bugs flit all about, and frogs  
call from the pool  
And all the wide world seems at peace, and  
all the world seems cool.

To just lie sprawled out on the grass and  
hear the owl's to-whoo,  
'Way out where not a city voice brings any  
fret to you,  
And all the world is sweet with peace, and  
winds are in the trees,  
And lullabies of old seem to come to you  
on the breeze;  
To lie there and to just forget that days  
are full of toil,  
That the tomorrow will come in with sweat  
and rush and moil;  
Forget the town, forget the toil, forget the  
things to do,  
And just imagine that the night and stars  
were made for you.

Just hypnotize yourself; forget the price of  
ham and eggs;  
Sip lightly of life's brimming cup, forget  
the bitter dregs;  
Forget life's hurts, forget false friends, for-  
get life's jolts and jars;  
Just yield yourself to the cool night and let  
it heal your scars;

Just put your hands behind your head and  
dream of bygone days,  
A little girl you knew of old, and old re-  
membered ways;  
And things she said, and things you said,  
and how you held her hand,  
And life seemed set to a sweet tune and all  
the world seemed grand.

The city is a fearsome place; the city streets  
are hot;  
Go wander off across the dark, across the  
meadow-lot,  
And find a place no other one has found,  
and watch the trees  
Stand dark against the summer sky or  
gently feel the breeze  
And sway in rhythm to its song, and watch  
the ripples flow  
Beneath the stars right to your feet as in  
the long ago  
They used to flow, and feel again all the  
old-time delights,  
And then go back made strong, and armed  
to fight a thousand fights.

## MIRACLES

**S**OME folks make me tired! Their arguments

Is so derved lackin' any kind o' sense  
That I can't argue with them! I won't try!  
I wave 'em to one side an' pass 'em by.  
If they'd confine themselves to politics—  
But I git crosser than a pair o' sticks  
When they knock at religion, an' they say:  
"Why ain't there any miracles to-day?"

Why ain't there any miracles to-day!  
When the sun rises can a feller say  
That ain't a miracle? An' when the moon  
Lights up the night, an' the air smells o'  
June,  
And all the world is bubblin' full o' love,  
It makes me wonder what they're thinkin'  
of!

An' when October comes an' paints the  
trees!

If miracles are wanted what are these?

The mornin's an' the nights, the wavin'  
trees,

The lights that lies on mountains, plains,  
an' seas;

The bu'stin' buds o' spring, the changin'  
fall,

The little streams a-singin', an' the call  
Of birds, far-sent from some woodland re-  
cess,

A father's love, a mother's tenderness,  
The tall red cannas that dip down an'  
sway—

And yet there ain't no miracle to-day!

And then we go a-tippytoe some morn  
To where a little baby, newly born,  
Is lyin' like a crumpled rose leaf lies,  
As pink an' pure, an' in its vi'let eyes  
A look of reminiscence of far things,  
Of heaven-slopes an' of white angel-wings,

And things that we've been here till we've  
forgot—

No miracles today! Who says there's not?

Why, every babe's a miracle, I know!  
Two of 'em call me Daddy; when you go  
An' stand beside a newborn baby's bed  
Its eyes tight shut in sleep, its fluffy head  
So light it hardly dents the pillar, you  
Are gazin' on a miracle; a few  
Can't seem to see it, but it ain't unkind  
To tell em' when they can't, by jing,  
they're blind!

When a new baby, where it's lyin' at  
Laughs in its sleep until it shakes its fat,  
Just laughs an' laughs an' chuckles, don't  
you s'pose

There's somethin' that that little baby  
knows

That it ain't had no time to learn on earth,  
That makes it shake its side for all its  
worth?

There's miracles to burn, big ones an'  
small,

But a new babe's the grandest one of all.

## THE COVERED BRIDGE

**T**HE new steel bridge across the crick's  
a pritty thing to see,  
As gauzy and as spidery as any bridge  
could be;  
It's floor's just like a solid road, cemented  
good an' tight,  
An' it's all painted red, an' it's a ruther  
pritty sight;  
But it don't have no charms fer me, don't  
please me not at all;  
The crick goes gurglin' just the same, an'  
givin' the old call,  
An' singin' comes along an' slips beneath  
the river road;  
But the new bridge ain't like the bridge,  
the covered bridge we knowed.  
We used to climb the slipp'ry rocks that led  
up to the ridge,



An' stump each other divin' off o' that old  
covered bridge;  
I learned to swim in its cool shade in the  
old swimmin' hole,  
An' used to sit beneath it with my can o'  
worms an' pole  
An' fish fer pouts an' suckers, an' fer cats  
th' hull day long,  
Whilst all the time the crick went by a-sing-  
in' of its song;  
An' so the new bridge don't fill up the place  
the old bridge did,  
The covered bridge we romped in when I  
was a little kid.

The covered bridge our voices went a-roll-  
in', boomin' through,  
Almost a-scarin' of ourselves each time we  
hollered, "boo";  
An' 'twas the dearest courtin' place that all  
the country knew,  
An' lovers walked from miles around to  
meet an' bill an' coo  
In its brown shadows, an' each day 'twas  
dark enough, you wis

Fer two to pause, an' heart to heart,  
exchange a lovin' kiss;  
An' Maggie's name was carved in it with  
my name, side by side;  
I carved them there while she looked on,  
the day she was a bride.

The day she was a bride—Oh, that was very  
long ago!  
Our children all played in its shade, an',  
when the lights git low,  
I hear their footsteps romp an' dance  
across its soundin' floor,  
An' hear the happy laughter of the ones  
that come no more;  
An' through its arches many times a slow  
procession wound,  
An' to the buryin' ground beyond, where,  
each beneath a mound,  
Our little children lie asleep beside their  
ma. To me  
The new bridge ain't so pritty as the old  
bridge used to be.

## THE OLD DIRT ROAD

**O**H, the old dirt path that was almost  
overgrewed  
With the grass and the bushes by the old  
dirt road  
That went windin' in an' out by the old  
rail fence,  
It's a-callin' to me now. It's a long time  
sence  
I have walked in the dust that was soft  
to my feet,  
Like a carpet o' velvet, an' night air so  
sweet  
Just breathin' it in was a everlastin' joy,  
Just breathin' of it in, an' bein' just a boy!  
  
Oh, the old dirt road! How it wound from  
side to side!  
'Twas just a narrow track, an' the world  
was so wide

There was hardly no use for the old road  
at all,  
But the robins 'ud build, an' orioles 'ud  
call  
Along its twisty length where it wound in  
an' out—  
Once it turned by a pool that was plum  
full of trout,  
Once it turned in a field to a spring by  
a tree;  
Just an old dirt road, as contented as  
could be.

A lazy, good-for-nothin' careless kind o'  
road!  
I can see it now, an' the weeds that over-  
grew  
Its edges, an' berries that in season 'ud  
hang  
From bushes in corners where wildbirds  
hid an' sang—  
See it like it wound, white an' misty 'neath  
the stars,  
Hear cattle callin' as they gether by the  
bars!

I'm homesick to go to it! Homesick as  
can be!—

It's always. forever, a-callin', callin' me.

## HOW IT HAPPENED

**I** WOULDN'T have dasted ask her if I'd  
stopped to think at all;  
But the glory vines was climbin' in a riot  
on the wall,  
An' I had picked up Jones' boy, a little  
an' barefoot tad,  
An' had took him walkin' with me cause it  
always made him glad,  
For to have a grown-up notice him,  
espeshly if 'twas me;  
So we cantered off together. No one seein'  
us would be  
Ap' to think I was a bachelor, satisfied an'  
plum resigned  
To his state, an' knowed all over as the  
woman-hatin' kind.

An' Tad trotted on beside me with his hand  
hold of my hand,  
His feet an' tongue a-goin', both of 'em, to  
beat the band;  
An' afore I was suspectin' it, the thought  
snuck up on me  
That when fellers without babies gits as  
old as they can be,  
An' ain't got no kin to love 'em, an' ain't  
got no little kids  
To hold in their arms an' croon to night-  
times when the katydids  
Is a-chirpin' in the thickets, an' the moon's  
a-shinin' through  
The tall trees, an' night-birds holler, what  
in God's name do they do?

What in God's name do they do at all, an'  
what can they be worth?  
Just a clod, a bump on nature, just a-clut-  
terin' the earth!  
An' 'twas whilst I was a-thinkin' these  
strange thoughts we come to where  
She was standin', leanin' over the old ruint  
wall; her hair

Sort of frazzled round her forrid, was a  
golden sort o' fuzz;  
An' her eyes was the same color that the  
mornin' glories was;  
An' she had Jones' little girl, Tad's sister,  
along o' her,  
An' was snugglin' her an' talkin' when we  
come to where they were.

And we neither one said nothin', didn't  
have a word to say,  
An' the children went together for to git  
us a bokay,  
An' a bird away off somewhere sung  
ka-hoot, ka-hoot, ka-hoot;  
An' I stood a while a-lookin' 'at the worn  
toe of my boot,  
An' then I looked into her eyes an' looked  
right away again,  
An' after awhile when I looked back her  
eyes was lookin' in  
My eyes, an' then she looked away as  
fluttered as she could be,  
An' I heard my voice a-sayin': "Would  
you marry up with me?"



An' then the pinkest rose-flush run all  
    across her neck, an' run  
To her cheeks, like paints the apple on the  
    side that's near the sun,  
An' her answer was just whispered, but it  
    raised me by the hair  
An' set me down right in heaven where the  
    happy angels air!  
An' I said: "I can't help wonderin' why a  
    girl as sweet as you  
Has gone single?" An' a glimmer lighted  
    up her eyes o' blue,  
An' we sorter leaned together, where the  
    mornin' glories climb,  
An' she said: "'Twas your fault, Jasper,  
    but I knowed you'd ask sometime."

## RAIN-WET

**I**T rained last night, and the whole wide  
world

Looks sweet and clean as it ought to be;  
Like a baby bathed and dressed and curled,  
And eyes a-glint with a baby's glee;  
And pink and purple and azure blue

The morning glories look fresh and  
sweet;

And fresh red roses are wet with dew,  
And grass is softer beneath the feet.

And everywhere, where a rainbow hit

A jasmine bud it has opened up,  
And a gem lies at the heart of it;

And a gem lies in the lily's cup;  
And trees look fresher and twice as cool,  
And twice as green as they were last  
night,

And children wade in a wayside pool,  
Splashing and shrieking in mad delight.

What a good old world! How clean and  
sweet

The busy old world is after all!  
Its shaded paths coax our weary feet,  
And every morning the mocker's call  
Comes with the very first streaks of dawn,  
With all the beauty the day-dawns hold,  
And all the fears of the night are gone,  
And the morning is azure and gold!

And babies lift as the glories do,  
Their fresh sweet faces and nod and  
smile,

The grass is green and the skies are blue  
And life is sweet and is well worth  
while;

Whatever fate may be holding back  
The strength to bear it is given when  
Fresh out of the night and storm and  
wrack

The world comes bringing its youth  
again.

The cattle low and the butterfly  
Flies lazily past the blossoms sweet,

And perfumed breezes are drifting by  
And bending daisies and meadow-sweet;  
Whenever the tasks of life are done,  
And our marching banners dipped and  
furled,  
May that land past the westering sun  
Look half as good as the rain-wet world.

## SUGAR LUMPS

**L**ET us go away off yonder down a path  
that used to be,  
'Way across the little footbridge, 'way  
beyond the apple tree;  
Skirt the hill the way we used to, skirt the  
ruffled wayside pool,  
With our books and slates and pencils, to  
the little country school;  
To the room with its long blackboards  
where we labored every day,  
To the yard where during recess boys and  
girls played pull-away,  
Or the girls, off in their corner, would play  
prisoner's base, and run  
Full of happiness and gladness, full of  
laughter in the sun.

Let's go back to a far springtime where the  
mellow sunlight shines,  
To the little girls we loved then; who  
inspired our valentines;  
Girls whose locks were golden yellow, girls  
whose eyes were cobalt blue,  
Girls to whom we wrote in loving: "Sugar's  
sweet and so are you."  
Girls in pinafores and collars, starched and  
clean as they could be,  
Girls who 'way across the schoolroom used  
to smile on you and me;  
Let's go back, away back yonder, down  
the paths we used to know,  
To the "sugar lumps" we loved so in the  
happy long ago.

You remember I am certain how our  
hearts would throb and race,  
How those days all of a sudden I began  
to wash my face  
And to keep it washed, and how you used  
to comb and brush your hair,  
And we scrubbed our necks until we were  
the cleanest, pinkest pair

Of schoolboys in the whole village, and  
    how father used to grin,  
And the look that mother'd give us when  
    we'd come a-marchin' in  
With a flower pinned onto us. How she'd  
    love and squeeze us two!  
Oh, the girls away back yonder! Naught  
    could cut our love in two!

Oh, the girls away back yonder! And the  
    perforated scrolls  
That each year took them our message;  
    heaven bless their little souls!  
Just the memory of their sweetness and  
    the days that used to be  
Makes that time away back yonder seem  
    the best in life to me!  
Years have stretched their length between  
    us as the years are wont to do,  
Severing the loves we used to swear no  
    knife could cut in two;  
But when springtime wakes the blossoms  
    and warms up the out-of-doors  
Memory goes back and snuggles by the  
    girls in pinafores.

## JUST GOIN' TO DAWDLE ALONG THE WAY

**I** AM goin' to laze along,  
Pausin' to hark to every song  
Of bird an' breeze an' brook an' tree,  
An' every kind of minstrelsy  
The world knows, an' sings; an' all  
Of it, its littlest wee call  
Will git response from me, an' I  
Shall dawdle 'long beneath the sky;  
Just like a feller waitin' till  
Th' first call o' the whippoorwill  
Tells him it's courtin' time; th' time  
When life seems flowin' to a rhyme.

Goin' to wait like that I be,  
Till your glad feet ketch up with me;  
Till you, 'cross fields o' babyhood  
An' youth an' truth, an' all that's good



Have come to me; have tripped along—  
Just like the spirit of some song  
Your mother used to sing to you  
Had grew an' grew an' grew an' grew,  
Until the song got so blamed small  
It couldn't hold it in at all,  
An' it had had to crystallize  
Into a woman with glad eyes.

Had had to be a livin' thing!  
A livin', breathin', sweet—By jing!  
Th' promise of what you will be  
Fills up this heart inside o' me  
Till I feel like she's 'bout to bust!  
An' then again I sort o' just  
Wish you would stay a little girl;  
With every little tousled curl  
Just like it was; an' always glad  
To snuggle in the arms of dad,  
An' sigh, an' drop away to sleep  
With him a-lovin' you a heap.

Heigh-oh! Oh-hum! My eyes gits dim  
A-thinkin' things, an' over-brim  
With tears; but men don't never cry—

It's prob'ly smoke. I wonder why  
I wasn't took? Your ma would be  
Ten times a better man than me  
To bring a girl up; but I guess  
God sort of knows His bizziness;  
Men can earn more—I 'spose it's best—  
Well, it's time that you was undressed  
An' said your "lay me down to sleep—"  
Dad's still here, lovin' you a heap.

## THE LONG SWEET-SMELLING DAYS

**T**HE ox-driver with his goad,  
And the oxen with their load,  
And the up-and-down and winding, dusty,  
townward wending road,  
And the bluejay on a rail  
Switchin' of his sassy tail,  
And a-scoldin' in a language that don't  
never seem to fail.

And the whirrin' of the mill  
Over yonder by the hill,  
With the buzzin' of its sawin' sort of  
minglin' with the rill,  
Till afur it sort of seems  
Like the singin' heard in dreams,  
Like the liftin', ripplin', liltin' of the  
dreamland bordered streams.

An' the long sweet-smellin' days  
Bloomin' from a sort of haze  
Every mornin', that drifts backward leavin'  
dewy country ways  
Stretchin' far an' straight ahead,  
Blossom bordered an' all spread  
With dust-layin' dew, and softer than a  
carpet to the tread.

An' I'm sorry till I frown  
Thinkin' of the folks in town,  
With their hurryin', worryin', an' rushin'  
up and down,  
Glad to simply work and live;  
Never knowin' when they've striv  
Any gladness like the gladness that the  
country ways can give.

I may never, never know  
Nights o' jostlin' to an' fro  
Where the theayters are crowded an' the  
streets are all aglow;  
But I know of bush an' tree  
An' the heavens over me,  
An' my happy red-cheeked babies make me  
glad as I can be.

## MACHINE LIMITATIONS

**I**'D love to sit by this machine  
And slowly touch the yielding keys,  
Till the whole world should see the sheen  
Of Rocky River through the trees;  
See the slate cliffs I used to know,  
And see the spider-webby span  
Of the bridge known so long ago,  
Away back where my life began.

I'd love to take the world with me  
Across my white typewriter keys,  
Until the whole wide world should see  
The things I see, feel the same breeze  
Upon its cheek; should go and wade  
With me across the shallow ford;  
And climb the cliff's face, unafraid,  
And drink with me from the old gourd.

The keys are unresponsive things!  
They never quite interpret right

The song that's in one's heart, and sings  
Its throbbing notes out to the night;  
The song of youth and gladsome days,  
The song of blossomed slopes and bees,  
The song of sumach bordered ways,  
And forest glades and shady trees.

They never can quite make the world  
See the rare color in the air—  
As if the sunset banners furled  
Had left their sweetest colors there;  
A color warm as sweetheart lips!  
A color holding all the gold  
Of truant locks, pink as the tips  
Of little fingers known of old.

Let my stiff fingers stray across  
The iv'ry faces as they may,  
I cannot make the branches toss,  
I cannot make the roses sway  
The way I'd like the world to see,  
The way I'd like the world to know,  
Or the whole world would sing with me  
Sweet love songs of the long ago.

## A CASE O' CAN'T HELP IT

**I**T'S just a case o' can't help it with me,  
By gee!

It's a case o' can't help it with me,  
Whoopee!

When I see a tow-headed boy or a girl,  
I feel like I'd like to just kiss every curl,  
And grab 'em right up and just give 'em  
a whirl;

It's a case o' can't help it with me!  
It's a case o' can't help it with me,

By jing!  
For it makes me feel glad as can be,  
And sing?  
My heart beats in ragtime! And hammers  
around,  
My feet do a rhythmical stunt on the  
ground,

I feel I could grab 'em and waltz 'em  
around!

It's a case o' can't help it with me!

A sweet tow-headed, glad, little girl,  
Ah, me!

Or a boy! How they set me awhirl,  
By gee!

I simply can't help it! I git full o' laugh,  
I tell 'em hello, an' I joke an' I chaff,  
I caper an' prance like a big yearlin' calf;  
It's a case o' can't help it with me.



## IF I HAD MY WAY

**I**F I had my way, and money to  
Do all the things I should like to do,  
I'd give a chuckle and laugh and shout  
And wipe the orphan asylums out!  
Each heart which craves for a baby boy,  
Or little girl, with a throb of joy  
Should get her wish and tight to her breast  
Each one should clasp which she loved the  
best;

An' croon songs to it when it grew late,  
An' I would chuckle an' pay the freight.

There are lots who long for babies small,  
To hear them patter along the hall;  
Who walk sad-hearted and all alone,  
Without a baby to call their own;  
And that's where I would come in, by jing!  
And orphan 'sylums would all go, bing!

I'd stoop and kiss every up-turned face,  
An' leave that 'sylum the lonest place  
That you ever knew, without the call  
Of a laughin', rompin' babe at all!

Or, if I but had the money to  
There's another thing I b'lieve I'd do—  
I'd put them other folks on the shelf  
An' mother the whole big bunch myself!  
And days we'd romp, and would laugh and  
play,  
Out over the hills and far away;  
An' nights I'd sit by a big grate fire  
An' tell 'em tales whilst the flames went  
higher;  
An' pray to the Lord each soul to keep,  
As fast as they snuggled down to sleep.

Till angel mothers peeped through the  
night,  
An' said: "He's got 'em an' they're all  
right!"  
And when they grew tired of romp and run  
A tender woman should love each one,

An' when they waked in the morning blue,  
All pink an' dimpled an' eager to  
Get out an' run in a happy crowd,  
I'd snuggle them till they laughed out loud;  
An' they'd be glad as the bees that buzz,  
An' 'ud never know what a spankin' was.

## TOGETHER

**T**HE sun shines as warm, and the world  
is as young—

But we—we are older;  
And sweet were the songs that the wild-  
birds have sung,

But days have grown colder;  
And bleak winds are swooping down out  
of the skies,

Are swooping and blowing;  
The red rose we loved is all wrecked, and  
it lies

Where erst it was growing.

Once life was all youth, and bright red  
was its mouth,

And pouting for kisses;  
But now the sweet songsters have flown  
away south;

One listens, but misses

The call of the mocker concealed in his tree,  
The cardinal's calling;  
A cold wind is blowing in off from the sea,  
And shadows are falling.

Do you care? Are you sad that birds are  
away;  
Sad, dear one, and grieving?  
Do you care that your locks are sprinkled  
with gray?  
That gold locks are leaving?  
We have walked up the trail from glad  
days of youth,  
In hand and together;  
Have laughed loud in glee at the shadow  
of ruth;  
Have laughed at the weather.

We have walked with a laugh where  
blossoms are tall,  
Hands clasped, through the meadows;  
Have loved and have laughed, hand in  
hand through it all;  
Let's laugh at the shadows!

Let us romp as we did, our laughter be  
clear,  
For all the wind's blowing!  
Death's the grandest venture of all, and  
it's near;  
Let's laugh and be going.

Let's laugh as we go down the path to the  
vale—

Let's laugh at the going!  
The red rose is dead, and the white rose  
is pale,  
And cold winds are blowing;  
But love's all about us, the sun is as warm,  
There's just as glad weather;  
Your hand in my hand, then who fears any  
storm!  
We're going together!

## JUST A TOUCH OF LONGING

**D**O I miss the old home? Why,  
I do miss the punkin pie  
That I got my fill of when  
Autumn had rolled 'round again;  
Punkin pie as big around  
As a cartwheel most, and browned  
Just the sort of brown that melts  
In your mouth like nothin' else!  
Do I miss the old home? My!  
I DO miss the punkin pie.

And I miss the killin' time!  
Hog backbone and spareribs! I'm  
All right till I start to think  
Of the spring, an' how I'd drink  
Out of it, a-lyin' down  
Sprawlin' right out on the groun'  
So's my lips could reach the spring;  
Bet there ain't another thing

In the world that can compare  
With that bubblin' spring back there.

An' I miss the cattle some,  
Miss the cows. God made 'em dumb,  
But their eyes 'ud seem to be  
Sayin' worlds of things to me.  
When I'd go into their stall  
An' I'd pat each one and call  
Her by name, an' she 'ud turn  
An' her big ca'm eyes 'ud burn  
With love for me. They was dumb  
But I miss the cattle—some.

An' nights when the sticks 'ud fall  
Inter coals, an' when the hall  
Would be full of ghosts, to scare  
Little boys until their hair  
Would feel prickly—Do I miss  
The old home, the mother-kiss—  
Well, this is 'twixt me and you  
I 'bout half believe I do!  
An' I always sort o' sigh  
At the thought of punkin pie.



## RESTING WITH NOVEMBER

**Y**OU could hardly tell November by the  
weather; it's so clear  
That sky-scrapers in the city, miles away,  
look just as near  
As the bunch of trees off yonder, and the  
wildbirds seem to sing  
Just as sweet a song as ever they sung to  
us in the spring;  
And the trees, as fur as I see, are a-lookin'  
'bout the same,  
'Ceptin' now and then a sweetgum is  
a-bustin' into flame,  
An' I never felt more fittin' to chop wood  
or go an' plow,—  
An' I never felt less like it than I happen  
to right now.

My old blood seems fairly rompin', like red  
licker, through my veins;

An' I ought to drive the hosses, with  
a-rattlin' of their chains,  
Where fall plowin' is a-waitin', an' there's  
other things to do;  
But the air is so perfumey, and the sky is  
such a blue,  
An' the roses are so bloomin', and the can-  
nas such a red,  
An' the violets so smilin' where they're  
hidin' in their bed,  
An' the whole world looks so restful, it  
should be ag'in' the law  
For a man to do a thing but stand around  
and chew a straw.

I would like to stand out yonder by the  
front fence, stand all day,  
So's to see the city people in their autos  
hike away  
For a day out in the country, for to spin  
across the hills;  
Where the sweetness of November just  
wells up and overfills  
Till no one can help but get it, get full of it  
through and through,

Of the redness of the cannas—but as  
certain as I do,  
When I'm half lost in my dreamin', an'  
have stood out there a spell,  
Some of them will stop an' ask me if I've  
got some eggs to sell.

Then I'll have to quit my dreamin' to hunt  
eggs and such like stuff;  
An' the dream that I am dreamin' will have  
left me sure enough;  
So I dassen't stand out yonder where the  
autos hike along;  
If I want to dream in quiet, and to hear  
the mockbird's song,  
There ain't no place that's so quiet as  
behind the barn for me,  
Where the yellow sun is fallin', an' where  
people lets me be;  
Wife imagines I am workin', an' the  
honkers go on by;  
But I'm restin' with November, an' the  
wild birds, an' the sky.

## THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

**M**E? Happy? I could hop up a swaying  
twig an' swing,  
If it was strong—I'm gittin' stout—an'  
sing an' sing an' sing  
Until the whole world turned its head to  
hear the music roll;  
An' still I'd sing, an' sing till I poured out  
my soul

I could—till I poured out my soul in one  
last gasp o' glee,  
Perched right up an a swayin' twig on  
some tall Christmas tree,  
A-tearin' loose an' spreadin' out, so clear  
an' high an' long  
That all the birds 'ud hush, an' all the  
world be filled with song.

I don't know what it is that's got into me,  
I'm so glad!

But somehow this is just the best Christ-  
mas I ever had!

I think it must be just because love's piled  
up more an' more,

Until there's more love in the world than  
ever was before!

The little children on the streets—each  
little girl and boy—

Are busier than teapots are, just bubblin'  
full o' joy!

An' all the stores in all the town where  
tramplin' buyers shove,

Have fairly got their walls bulged out,  
they are so filled with love.

If each clerk had a thousand hands she'd  
have all she could do;

But not a one is lookin' glum, an' not a  
one is blue;

They're filled with Christmas spirit till it  
shines out of their eyes,  
It's in the bundles they wrap up, an' in  
their sweet replies.

I wish for them all that they wish, an'  
then a whole lot more;  
An' for the little bits o' tads just smilin'  
in life's door  
I wish a life of Christmases as glad as this,  
by jing!  
I wish I COULD perch on a twig an' sing  
an' sing an' sing!



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